

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 121044
ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY EUR/CE:ENLAUDERDALE
APPROVED BY EUR: J. E. GOODBY
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PM/ISP:JHAWES(INFO)
EUR/SOV:KBROWN(INFO)
S/S :RCASTRODALE
EUR/CE:WMWOESSNER
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 121044

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, MPOL, SOPN, GW, CG, US

SUBJECT: OTRAG TEST LAUNCH

REF: STUTTGART 0900
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1. DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES TIMELY REPORT CONCERNING RE-SCHEDULING OF OTRAG'S NEXT LAUNCH FOR LAST WEEK IN MAY. WE ARE FRANKLY DISTURBED AT BOTH THE TIMING AND THE SECRECY WITH WHICH LAUNCH WILL APPARENTLY BE CARRIED OUT. SOVIET PROPAGANDISTS WILL HAVE FIELD DAY PORTRAYING SECRECY OF LAUNCH AS EVIDENCE THAT OTRAG IS NO MERE

COMMERCIAL VENTURE, AND POINTING OUT THAT TIMING COINCIDES WITH NATO SUMMIT. JOURNALISTS, MANY OF WHOM ARE SUSPICIOUS ANYWAY, WILL BE ANGERED BY DECEPTION INVOLVED SINCE IT WAS EXPECTED SOME WOULD BE INVITED TO JUNE LAUNCH.

2. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S VIEWS AS TO HOW THIS TROUBLESOME ISSUE MIGHT BEST BE DEFUSED. WE ARE SENSITIVE TO THE FACT THAT ANY OVERT INTERFERENCE IN THE OPERATION OF A PRIVATE COMPANY IS PROBLEMATIC. AT THE SAME TIME, WE BELIEVE THE ABOVE POINTS SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH THE FRG EMBASSY HERE.
VANCE

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